

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 3-11, 13-22, and 25-45 are pending in the present application. Claims 2 and 12 are canceled without prejudice, Claims 1, 3-11, and 13-22 are amended, and new Claims 25-45 are added by the present amendment.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claim 9 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph; Claims 1-17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) as anticipated by JP 2001341927 A to Tsutsui; Claims 1, 2, 6-15, 19, and 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by JP 2000086064 A to Ishiguro et al. (herein "Ishiguro"); and Claim 3 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Ishiguro in view of JP 62-8965 to Hoshi et al. (herein "Hoshi").

Regarding the rejection of Claim 9 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, Claim 9 is amended to recite "said arrangement using said arrangement means prevents an initial sheet-shaped medium of a copy from aligning," which is supported in the specification at least at page 62, line 18 to page 63, line 3. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested this rejection be withdrawn.

Claims 1-17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) as anticipated by Tsutsui. That rejection is respectfully traversed.

To perfect the claim of priority to Japanese application JP 2000-381311, a translation of that application is enclosed. Tsutsui has a publication date of December 11, 2001, which is after the claimed priority date of the present application of December 15, 2000. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that rejection is improper and it is requested that rejection be withdrawn.

Claims 1, 2, 6-15, 19, and 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by Ishiguro. That rejection is respectfully traversed.

Amended Claim 1 includes similar features as Claims 2 and 12 and is directed to a sheet-shaped medium processing apparatus in which “concave sections are formed at an upper surface of said piling means so that part of said one pair of arranging members may be placed below the upper surface of said piling means.”

In a non-limiting example, Figure 2(a) shows a concave section 80a that is formed opposite the arranging member 102a and another concave section 80b formed opposed to another arranging member 102b. Thus, a depression below an upper surface of the tray 12 is partially formed (see also the specification at page 25, lines 17-20).

As an advantage, when paper is not piled on the concave sections 80a and 80b, the arranging members 102a and 102b located in an acceptance position have parts in the concave sections 80a and 80b, overlapping with the tray 12. Therefore, it is possible to strike the arranging members 102a and 102b against the end faces of the paper S in an arranging operation with high precision (see also the specification at page 25, lines 20-25).

In contrast, Ishiguro merely shows arranging portions 211 and 31 that slide along a track in a processing tray 11. It is noted that the processing tray 11 is separate from the accumulation tray 12; the accumulation tray 12 corresponds to the claimed “piling means.” Accordingly, Ishiguro does not teach or suggest at least concave sections “formed at said upper surface of said piling means,” as recited in independent Claim 1.

Therefore, independent Claim 1 and each of the claims depending therefrom are believed to be allowable.

Claim 3 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Ishiguro in view of Hoshi. That rejection is respectfully traversed.

As discussed, independent Claim 1 is believed to patentably distinguish over Ishiguro. Further, Claim 3 depends on Claim 1, and Hoshi also does not teach or suggest the features of independent Claim 1. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted independent Claim 3 and each of the claims depending therefrom further patentably distinguish over Ishiguro and Hoshi.

In addition, Claims 1, 3-11, and 13-22 are amended to better conform to U.S. claim drafting practice and to correct minor informalities, and Claims 3 and 13-16 are amended to depend on amended Claim 1. Further, the specification and abstract are also amended to correct minor informalities and to better conform to U.S. patent practice. It is believed no new matter is added.

Also, new Claims 25-45 are added, which are similar to Claims 1-24 but are drafted not to use means-plus-function terminology. New Claims 25-45 are believed to be allowable at least for similar reasons as Claims 1-24, and it is believed no new matter is added.

Consequently, in light of the above discussion and in view of the present amendment this application is believed to be in condition for allowance and an early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

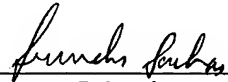
OBLON, SPIVAK, McCLELLAND,  
MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C.

Customer Number

**22850**

Tel: (703) 413-3000  
Fax: (703) 413 -2220  
(OSMMN 08/03)

GJM/SNS/RMR/cac



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Gregory J. Maier  
Attorney of Record  
Registration No. 25,599  
Surinder Sachar  
Registration No. 34,423

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